To Rob, Tim, RPC, DES, etc.

Having long since reached a point of diminishing returns with this project, I am hoping this can be my final delivery. It is by no means “complete” in the sense of my having researched or even reviewed every possible marsh parcel, but a more informed understanding developed in the course of my work continues to highlight the futility of trying to extract any sort of order from the chaos that has developed, especially in the last 150 years, regarding ownership of the hundreds of marsh tracts in the Seabrook Hampton Estuary. Too many of these tracts are of unknown location and configuration, even to the parties who hold title to them. The physical layout of creeks and other natural boundaries has changed so significantly since the days of original grants and early divisions that much of what was called “marsh” in colonial times has now evolved into “flats” or even open water, making interpretation of already vague deed descriptions even more unreliable. The continuing widening of rivers and creeks gives rise to legal questions around riparian rights (such as accretion vs avulsion and state ownership of navigable waters) beyond the scope of this project but certainly relevant to title and jurisdiction.

If I have managed to “prove” anything in the last year, I suppose it might be that all of my work has not brought us any closer to knowing where or under what authority a large-scale restoration or rejuvenation project might be undertaken in the Estuary. Perhaps having essentially failed at the original objective, I might have provided convincing evidence that a governmental action establishing broader authority over the marshes might be necessary.

Of course I’m here for anything else you need, questions, meetings, report proofing and the like. And of course I need your blessing to lay off the rabbit holes, at least for now…..

This been a fascinating albeit frustrating exercise for me, and I remain hopeful that my work can somehow serve as a meaningful contribution to the larger goal we all share of saving the Estuary from climate change.

Tocky